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THE GRAND INQUISITOR

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Cp378  
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# THE GRAND

# INQUISITOR





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# THE GRAND INQUISITOR

Vol. 1, No. 1

a journal of opinion edited by the Catholic Graduate Students  
Association of the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill

## Editorials

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Catholic graduate students (and any other interested people) meet for  
dinner and discussion every Monday evening 6:15 - 7:30 in the Upper Room,  
second floor, Lenoir Cafeteria.

April 24 . Open Forum: on subjects raised in current issue of  
THE GRAND INQUISITOR

May 1 "Doubt and Faith" discussion led by Father James  
Devereux, S.J.

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The copy of "The Grand Inquisitor" was done by Lloyd Miller

## THE GRAND INQUISITOR: A PROLOGUE

The title of this magazine comes from the fifth chapter in Book V of Dostoevsky's The Brothers Karamazov. In that chapter, the Grand Inquisitor gives a description of what man is and what he needs, and shows how the Church has come to accept that definition, and is fulfilling those needs. He is speaking to Jesus, who has reappeared briefly on earth at the height of the Inquisition. Jesus is to be burned as a heretic who has come to hinder the work of the Church. The old Cardinal who is the Grand Inquisitor, tells Him that He was wrong in trying to give man his freedom. The Church, he says, has finally recognized that man does not want and cannot be happy with freedom, and is working to make men "lay their freedom at our feet, and say to us, 'make us your slaves, but feed us.'" The Church has seen that in order to make men give up their freedom, and thus become happy, the three powers must be used which Jesus was offered by Satan, but foolishly rejected, miracle, mystery and authority. "We have corrected Thy work and have founded it upon miracle, mystery and authority. And men rejoiced that they were again led like sheep and that terrible fit that had brought them such suffering was at last lifted from their hearts."

The Grand Inquisitor's assessment of mankind is a widespread one. It appears in various forms, often very subtle ones, and, it must be admitted, it is an assessment which can be very convincing. The primary hypothesis, and the most basic raison d'être of this journal, is a belief that this assessment is a false one. Freedom does entail a great deal of pain--we cannot deny this. The temptation is always strong to reject freedom, and to choose the easier, more comfortable way of conformity to some powerful and attractive source of authority. We believe, however, that in spite of the difficulty and pain involved in opting for freedom, men want it, need it, and must opt for it. Any institution which attempts to destroy this option, no matter how much it believes itself to be motivated by love of man and to be acting in his best interest, is actually destroying a divine gift, and denying the message of Christ.

In various ways, the Roman Catholic Church has seemed to be such an institution. Priests, bishops, cardinals and popes have had, and have worked with, assessments of human nature and needs very much like that held by Dostoevsky's Grand Inquisitor. There have always been many people eager to surrender their freedom in return for miracles, mystery and authority. The Inquisition was undoubtedly the most open and blatant expression of such a viewpoint, but not the only expression of it. A mentality and tactics similar to those of the Inquisition have been connected with members of the Church in countries outside Spain, and in centuries other than the sixteenth.

We believe such a mentality results in a perversion of the function Christ intended His Church to perform. It is a false evaluation of man wherever and whenever it exists, and is completely alien to the true spirit of the Church. Christ affirmed the infinite value and dignity of man, and this affirmation is denied by anyone who would either surrender his own or demand anyone else's freedom. Such actions are those of misguided individuals, not of Christ's Church.



The Grand Inquisitor is a journal published by a group of Catholic laymen who feel that a person must opt for and exercise his freedom in all areas of his life--above all, in his worship of God. We want the journal to function as a forum for examination and discussion of this thesis. An invitation to use it as such is hereby extended to anyone interested in the question. Agreement with and dissension from the thesis in general or particular applications of it, are equally welcome. We are not, of course, an official voice of the Church in any respect, but are deeply concerned with the Church in all respects.

Our policy is to accept and print articles, letters and editorials from anyone, dealing with any aspect of the question of freedom. Discussion of questions concerned with such areas as politics, ethics, morality, education, art, etc. will be considered equally as relevant to the thesis of the journal as discussion of specifically religious, Christian and Catholic questions. The journal will be published once a month. If it is to perform effectively the function we intend for it, support from its readers in the form of articles and letters will be necessary. We urge you, if discussion of the basic theme is of interest, to provide that support.

## THE PILL, THE COED, AND FREEDOM

In the current controversy over the propriety of the infirmary's providing coed students with birth control pills, many interesting and strange arguments have been printed in the pages of the Daily Tarheel. Let us here consider what is to be one of the best arguments against providing pills for the coeds and one of the best answers to this argument.

One of the arguments against making the birth control pills available to coed students through the student infirmary is that such availability will encourage promiscuity. The argument is, of course, more or less strong depending upon what one understands by promiscuity. It seems that promiscuity can mean one of at least three things to the proponents of the arguments. First, it seems to mean sexual conduct not easily differentiated from those of a nymphomaniac. Second, promiscuity can mean a casual attitude towards sexual conduct; for instance considering sexual intercourse to be about as serious as necking. Third, in some people's minds promiscuity seems to mean any sort of premarital sexual relations. Under this definition, the sexual relations engaged in by couples involved in a serious love-relation--the sort of love-relation which the "new" morality feels makes premarital sexual relations moral--would be promiscuous.

Now, it seems that the availability of the birth control pill would encourage promiscuity under one of these definitions. It surely would mean an increase of promiscuity if promiscuity means the sexual relations of couples in a serious love-relation. However, it hardly seems fair either to call this promiscuity or to blame its occurrence on the student infirmary--or other agency dispensing the pills. Such couples, for good or ill--we pointedly avoid the question here--are serious enough about their relations, are well aware enough of its consequences, to see to appropriate birth control measures, whether the infirmary makes them available or not.

The only sense in which the infirmary can be held responsible for encouraging promiscuity by dispensing birth control pills is the sense in which promiscuity is defined as either nymphomaniacal or casual sexual conduct. I hope that no one is arguing that the availability of the pill at the student infirmary will produce an outbreak of suppressed nymphomania. Rather, what really seems to be behind the promiscuity argument is the fear that the availability of the birth control pill through the student infirmary will encourage a casual attitude towards sexual conduct.

In the absence of any data on the subject, we cannot definitely say one way or the other whether such a casual attitude will actually be encouraged by dispensing the pill at the infirmary. But let us suppose for the sake of the argument that people would be encouraged to adopt a casual attitude towards sexual conduct. What can we mean by their being encouraged?

Presumably the encouragement comes in the form of a lifting of the fear that sexual intercourse will result in pregnancy. The encouragement will be that if a girl does wish to take a casual attitude then she can do so without fearing that she might be putting herself in danger of becoming pregnant. This is a strange sort of encouragement; it is the encouragement that comes from being freed from having to pay some of, perhaps the greatest of, the consequences for an action. It allows the individual to decide whether he or she wants to avoid doing evil because the evil itself is bad or because the effects of the evil are bad. That is, this is an encouragement that comes with freedom.

It is traditional Christian teaching that casual sexual conduct is evil. We feel that this teaching is wise and sound. A casual attitude towards sexual conduct seems inevitably to victimize at least one, if not both, of the partners; it is a perversion of our morality based on other-regarding love.

However, not every means of preventing casual sexual conduct is a good means for attaining its end. Moreover, it would seem that a means for securing the practice of the Christian sexual code that relies on fear is not the best means to attaining the end in view. In particular, if the only reason that many individuals on this campus imitate the Christian sexual code is that they fear unwed pregnancy then it is safe to say that they are not observing the Christian code at all.



What we wish, as Christians, is that people embrace our code of conduct from the right motives. Surely St. Paul has spelled that out quite clearly for us. We wish people freely to choose the Christian sexual code, not simply to do so because it is the most convenient thing to do.

If having the infirmary dispense the birth control pill to coed students will let students on this campus decide freely whether they wish to follow the Christian sexual code, then it would seem that the pill ought to be distributed by the infirmary. Anything which contributes to one person's freedom without abridging anyone else's freedom is desirable.

However, it would be irresponsible to advocate freedom in this regard without pointing out that dispensing birth control pills at the student infirmary would do very little to insure the freedom to choose a sexual moral code without coercion. There are other factors which make the prospect for freedom in sexual conduct seem, if not hopeless, then at least doubtful.

Freedom is only exercised if it is exercised with intelligence, i.e., if it is intelligent choice. There are two sources of influence in the ordinary student's life which do not allow for intelligent choice in sexual matters. One source of influence is the student's folk religion; the other is the undergraduate caste system.

Folk religion is the mindless fundamentalism, Protestant or Catholic, which teaches a morality based on fear. Folk religion is not able to conceive of a morality chosen for any reason other than eternal damnation. Therefore, when the student seeks for reasons other than fear, i.e., intelligent reasons, for following the Christian sexual code, he usually finds none. His folk religion has failed to help him make an intelligent choice.

In the absence of an intelligently offered reason for following the Christian sexual code, the student tends to succumb to the sexual code which is part of the fabric of the campus caste system. It can be admitted in all fairness and without self-righteousness that in some quarters there is an attitude that makes a casual sort of sexual conduct a matter of group identification. This is part of the campus caste system.

It must be understood that this is not a question of overt pressure or even of malicious intent. The attitude to which reference is being made is not that conscious; it is as mindless as the attitude of folk religion. The attitude which makes casual sexual conduct a matter of group identification is the same sort of attitude--although not necessarily had by the same people--which makes V neck sweaters, sockless loafers, print dresses, and madras blouses a matter of group identification to the detriment of freedom. This situation inevitably abridges the freedom of the affected students.

Yet it must be urgently pleaded that one's sexual code is far too important a matter to be so treated. Sexual morality is too far reaching in individual lives

and in the corporate life to be a matter of fad. There should be more intelligent discussion of this problem, less of the hyper-emotionalism of North Carolina's Mrs. Grundys and less of the ill-concealed leer of the Playboy contingent. Sex is far too serious a problem to be inundated by sentimentality or to be treated as though it were recreation.

The more basic question therefore raised by the problem of giving birth control pills to coed students is whether there is going to be, in adopting a sexual code, freedom not only from fear of pregnancy, but from the pressures of fear morality and mindless social snobbery. We would urge those who advocate freedom to advocate freedom in all regards.

--R. D. P.

#### ON RELIGIOUS TOLERATION

We have witnessed in post-war American society a quite general tendency toward toleration of a plurality of ethical values and religious views. Since the Vatican Council the Church has seemed rather gracefully to be joining this trend. I wish to suggest that the attitude of Christians toward the religious views of others must be radically different from that which now prevails in American society at large. For what passes for toleration in our society, far from being an acceptance of a plurality of views born of respect for the integrity and freedom of our fellow men, is rather a thoroughgoing indifference to the religious views and values of others. It is an indifference which follows from the at least tacit conviction that since religious beliefs have in fact no effect on life as it really is they are matters of interest and consequence only to the individual who happens to hold them. This is a radically un-Christian attitude.

The uncompromising character of the teachings of Christ, the absolute and unified nature of the Christian faith, and the fact that salvation comes to men through a total acceptance of this faith allow us to be no more indifferent to the religious views of our fellow men than the Apostles. As Christians we are in the curious position of insisting that if our faith is to be accepted by others, it be accepted with all the freedom which nature allows, and of insisting none the less that it be accepted. As Christians we must maintain that acceptance of One Lord, One Faith, and One Baptism is necessary for any true fulfillment of man; we cannot consequently be indifferent if our fellow men do not accept them. The truly Christian attitude toward contrary religious beliefs must be one of honest toleration born of a respect for the dignity of others and for their freedom of choice in these matters; but this toleration must be joined with a concern for our fellow men which urges us in every way to cooperate with God's grace to bring about the conversion of all men to the Christian faith. The measures we take, urged on by this concern, must of course be prudently chosen, carefully adapted to the era and the persons involved. But the imperative to teach all nations is with us always and indifference to the religious beliefs of our fellows is treason to our Christian commitment.

--D. J. S.

## LAYMEN: FISH OR FOWL?

by Thomas Stumpf

Is the new role of the layman in the Church simply the old role dressed up to appear new? Prof. Thomas Stumpf, assistant professor of English at U. N. C., argues that this is the case.

One of the clearest results of Vatican II has been the formal enshrinement of a new theological and pastoral rhetoric. Substantive doctrinal changes have been few and ambiguous, but there are new cant phrases which, to give them their due, express some real changes in attitude. Laymen, for example, have been noticed and are being fussed over, something which should have happened, as we all feel so keenly, long ago. This is, we have been told, the age of the layman. We are assured that the church is not only priest and clerk ---any more than the Jews were only priest and Levite. The Church is now, in the new, vaguely Biblical rhetoric, the "people of God." We could be excused, I think, for having responded so unreservedly to the intoxicating novelty of such phrases; but we can also be excused for cherishing of late some healthy suspicions. As Pope put it rather dryly, "Words are like Leaves; and where they most abound, / Much Fruit of Sense beneath is rarely found."

Perhaps nowhere is this gap between rhetoric and substance more painfully pronounced than in the decrees on the priesthood and the laity. The problem of the relationship between layman and cleric in the Church is now an acute one. Among all classes, though for very different reasons, there would seem to exist a latent anti-clericalism whose virulence is scarcely even suspected by the clergy. Intellectuals have been enduring arrogance and inanity from the hierarchy for years and have begun to react as I suspect the rest of the laity has reacted for some time. They find the clergy increasingly irrelevant---a group of people incredibly remote from the experiences which shape other minds and hearts. A perfunctory respect for the clergy, in the interests of politeness and good order, conceals a growing indifference; and before long, perhaps even annoyance will be a thing of the past. It is a truism that laymen no longer look to the clergy for intellectual leadership, nor even, to an increasing extent, for personal advice. They have left the clergy with Mass and the sacraments---at most, two hours of the day. On their part, intelligent clergies have responded by assuming an increasing role in secular education and social action. Obviously, the two estates are losing their traditional definitions and their traditional relationship to each other; and Vatican II has attempted to ameliorate the situation by redefining, or perhaps only restating, the roles of both priest and layman. Unfortunately, the "new definitions," insofar as they can be isolated, are not really satisfactory.

The Council asserts that "all the faithful are made a holy and royal priesthood," and again that the laity are "consecrated into a royal priesthood and a holy people." In the Constitution on the Church, however, the priesthood of the faithful and the



hierarchical priesthood are said to "differ from one another in essence and not only in degree." (II, 10) In the light of such a passage, one suspects that all efforts to blur the distinction between the hieratic and the secular are for the most part confined to rhetorical flourishes and hints, never fully articulated, of some kind of analogy between the Church and the chosen people of the Old Testament. Though it's almost impossible to make generalizations about the Council documents because of a composite authorship which, to put it mildly, "yokes heterogeneous elements violently together," there is little doubt that any efforts to remove the rigid separation of sacred and secular are likely to founder on a very old tradition.

Early in the decree on the laity, the Council fathers reveal some of their presuppositions:

Christ's redemptive work, while of itself directed toward the salvation of men, involves also the renewal of the whole temporal order.... In fulfilling this mission of the Church, the laity, therefore, exercise their apostolate both in the Church and in the world, in both the spiritual and the temporal orders. These realms, although distinct, are so connected in the one plan of God that He Himself intends in Christ to appropriate the whole universe into a new creation, initially here on earth, fully on the last day.

In many ways, this is a very "liberal" passage. Here at least---though other passages give a very different effect---there is no limitation of the laity's competence to things temporal. There is, moreover, thanks to the rise of Incarnational theology, no righteous castigation of the things of this world, no evocation of the image of the poor, pilgrim soul. But though the temporal order is no longer spoken of as something to be merely endured, neither is it really holy, or even sacramental, not, at least, until the apocalypse. Another passage from the constitution on the Church (IV, 36) tries to have it both ways, asserting that "the faithful should learn how to distinguish carefully between those rights and duties which are theirs as members of the Church, and those which they have as members of human society. Let them strive to harmonize the two..." Here, of course, the very assertion of a need for harmony is at the same time a recognition of distinction. The passage goes on to say that "it must be recognized that the temporal sphere is governed by its own principles, since it is properly concerned with the interests of this world..." Though the document goes on to qualify the distinction yet, again, we can still perceive the gap between the world of the flesh and the world of the spirit, between the things of time and the things of eternity. Though the antagonism between them has been muted, the two are still very far apart; and it requires only a small exercise of logic to deduce a relationship between the priest who is primarily a spiritual citizen and the layman who is involved in the temporal sphere.

It should be pointed out, moreover, that the Council documents continually emphasize for the layman the role which Christ, significantly enough, assigned to the whole Church. In On the Church (IV, 31) we read: "They live in the world, that is, in each and in all of the secular professions and occupations... They are called

there by God so that by exercising their proper function and being led by the spirit of the gospel, they can work for the sanctification of the world from within in the manner of leaven." And again in IV, 33: "Now the laity are called in a special way to make the Church present and operative where only through them can she become the salt of the earth." It is true that in these passages the laity is given a role in saving others and not merely consigned to the ignominy of being saved, but the differences in the way that priests and laymen make things holy could scarcely be clearer. In the words of the decree in the laity (II, 7): "The laity must take on the renewal of the temporal order as their own special obligation.... The temporal order must be renewed in such a way that, without the slightest detriment to its own proper laws, it can be brought into conformity with the higher principles of the Christian life." There is then the temporal sphere and the "higher (spiritual) principles of the Christian life." Laymen are to harmonize the two from within the temporal and priests, by implication, from without.

A most intriguing question soon presents itself. Just what is the "temporal order"? What sort of pursuits are "temporal" and what are "spiritual"? When many American clerics think about activities which are "temporal" and are thus the peculiar province of the laity, they are likely to have in mind diocesan expansion funds and parish credit unions. The Council documents expand this notion but not, in my opinion, nearly enough. Social justice and social renewal are of course foremost in the list of activities to which the laity ought to devote itself, as the decree on the laity makes clear: "Therefore, the laity should hold in high esteem and, according to their ability, aid the works of charity and projects for social assistance, whether public or private, including international programs whereby effective help is given to needy individuals and peoples." (II, 8) Moreover, the layman is also, it seems, competent to act in something called "civic culture," which is apparently quite amoral in itself: "Therefore, by their competence in secular fields and by their personal activity, elevated from within by the grace of Christ, let them labor vigorously that by human labor, technical skill, and civic culture created goods may be perfected for the benefit of every last man, according to the design of the Creator and the light of his Word.... By so doing, laymen will imbue culture and human activity with moral values." (On the Church, IV, 36) Although the layman is also urged to acquire "solid doctrinal instruction in theology, ethics, and philosophy," (On the Laity, VI, 29) the implication, reinforced by other passages in the decree on the clergy, is that the latter disciplines are the preserve of the clergy and are needed to properly channel the layman's expertise.

The problems here are enormous because there seems, just beneath the surface, to be the assumption that the laity is to concern itself with efficient causes, with means, with techniques, whereas disputes about final causes, ends, and ultimate goals are the province of the clergy. The layman thus becomes a purveyor of expertise, a technician. It is not merely the lay theologian, (even now a rara avis), who gets short shrift but all the many laymen engaged in humanistic studies: the psychologists, philosophers, historians, literary scholars -- not to mention

creative artists of all kinds. These men feel, and rightly so, that they have learned things about the nature of man and human morality which they must, as it were, teach the Church, that they are competent to speak not only of means but of ends, that they should not only be allowed to carry out policies already made but ought to have a voice in the making of policy. As long, however, as theology, ethics, and morality are not admitted to be as much the province of the layman as technology and "civic culture," the Church is depriving itself of knowledge and energy it cannot afford to do without.

As far as the spiritual order is concerned, "the ministry of the Word and of the sacraments... are entrusted in a special way to the clergy." (On the Laity, II, 6) And "priests, as co-workers with their bishops, have as their primary duty the proclamation of the gospel to all." (On Priests, II, 4) This vocation is not as circumscribed as it might at first appear, since the "ministry of the Word" apparently applies to a general jurisdiction in moral matters. Thus, in the decree on the laity, (V, 24), we are reminded that "as regards activities and institutions in the temporal order, the role of the ecclesiastical hierarchy is to teach and authentically interpret the moral principles to be followed in temporal affairs. Furthermore, it has the right to judge, after careful consideration of all related matters and consultation with experts, whether or not such activities and institutions conform to moral principles." In fact, the extent to which clerics are set up as judges of lay activity, "testers of spirits" as the documents would say, is just a trifle annoying. The priest is not only to be minister and preacher but also moral arbiter. He is therefore, especially if he is also a bishop, officially competent to make pronouncements about human nature and human morality. In point of fact, however, he is seldom competent to do anything of the sort, especially since his knowledge, as we learn from the decree on priests (III, 19), is to be primarily a knowledge of scripture. "The knowledge of a sacred minister should be sacred, since it is drawn from a sacred fountain and is directed to a sacred goal. Hence that knowledge should be drawn primarily from reading and meditating on the sacred Scriptures. But it should also be fruitfully nourished by a study of the Holy Fathers and Doctors and other annals of tradition." In all justice, we should also quote a sentence which occurs later: "Since in our times human culture and the sacred sciences are making new advances, priests are urged to develop their knowledge of divine and human affairs aptly and uninterruptedly." Frankly, however, this perfunctory nod to "human culture" seems little more than a liberal afterthought. What is most disturbing, however, is the persistence of the assumption that there are two kinds of truth, sacred and profane. The Church would do well to keep in mind the teachings of its own philosophers that truth is not only great, it is also one.

The recent disputes about celibacy serve to underline yet another aspect of Church's ambivalent attitude towards its priests. For one thing, the Council documents now insist, and I think the emphasis is new, upon the fact that "Priests are taken from among men and appointed for men in the things which pertain to God, in order to offer gifts and sacrifices for sins. Hence they deal with other men as with brothers." (On Priests, I, 3) Statements like this occur fairly fre-



quently and are meant, I suppose, as attempts to neutralize the sort of anti-clericalism that springs from too much insistence upon the priests' special status. Here, certainly, the Council's rhetoric reflects what is in the United States at least, a matter of fact. Many young priests are so determined to emphasize their humanity and underplay the differences between them and their lay friends that the resultant camaraderie can be strained and downright embarrassing.

The sense of strain comes from the fact that everyone realizes--and the Church insists--that men though they be, our brethren in orders "are indeed set apart in a certain sense within the midst of God's people." But this is so, not that they may be separated from this people or from any man, but that they may be totally dedicated to the work for which the Lord has raised them up." Their separateness depends at least in part upon the lingering assumption that "the world," "the temporal order," in which the layman is enmeshed, is in some way inferior to the "spiritual order." A very illustrative passage occurs in the decree on priests:

By friendly and fraternal dealings among themselves and with other men, priests can learn to cultivate human values and to esteem created goods as gifts of God. Still as they go about in this world they should always realize that according to the word of our Lord and Master they are not of this world. Therefore, using the world as though they used it not, they will attain to that liberty which will free them from all excessive concern and make them docile to the divine voice which makes itself heard in everyday life. (II, 17)

The language is very careful since no one wants to say that the world is simply evil; yet at the same time, the authors feel the need to assert what is obviously the message of long ecclesiastical tradition: that priests, though they might perhaps be in the world, should not be of it. The ticklishness of the whole passage is apparent from the fact that the commentator finds it necessary to footnote as follows: "A positive attitude, free of any taint of Manicheism, is inculcated in regard to human values and the good things of God's creation, but the priest must not be a prisoner of what the world has to offer, because his consecration demands that he especially be a free man." There is a very delicate balance to be maintained here, and there is clearly some uneasiness about whether or not it has been.

The corollaries of this assertion of the inferiority of the "world" and the elevation of priests who are "not of the world" are many and obvious. Celibacy is only one of them. Another is the insistence that "in building the Christian community, priests are never to put themselves at the service of any ideology or human faction. Rather, as heralds of the gospel and shepherds of the Church, they must devote themselves to the spiritual growth of the Body of Christ." (On Priests, I, 6) Priests, therefore, are not to engage in politics or, presumably, ideological debate, a clause which might be cold comfort to the priests engaged in political and social reform in Latin America and which should also be a source of some amazement to those who know anything about Church history. Another corollary, found in the constitution On the Church (IV, 31) is the insistence that "a secular

quality is proper and special to laymen. It is true that those in holy orders can at times engage in secular activities, and even have a secular profession. But by reason of their particular vocation they are chiefly and professedly ordained to the sacred ministry." This is as much a monitum as anything else since the trend is obviously running the other way, and many who were once fishers of men are now casting after advanced degrees. In all honesty, it should be admitted that there are very effective (and, to me, convincing) justifications for celibacy, and that the warning against priestly politics (remember Father Coughlin) is in many instances well taken. And it must be acknowledged that an assertion of pastoral preeminence is necessary if many religious orders are to be more than communities of celibate scholars.

Nevertheless, it is depressing to note the extent to which priests and laymen are still "separated brethren," the extent to which the "world" and secular learning are still under a cloud of suspicion, and the extent to which the rhetoric that celebrates the layman is, for the most part, just rhetoric. After some nineteen hundred years, the Church still seems torn between the desire to exclude the world and the desire to embrace it. Perhaps to come down on one side or the other would be Pelagianism or Manicheism, and perhaps the Church must maintain a balance between them which is tense and uncomfortable. For many of us, however, the chief fault of the contemporary Church is not that it is too worldly but that it is not worldly enough. For several hundred years now, the Holy Spirit has been at least as busy outside the Church as within it. If there is a great deal about man which the world must still learn from the Church, the reverse is also true. Since about 1700 the Church has been, no one can deny, harmless as a dove; perhaps it's about time to try to become as wise as the serpent.

## AN INTERVIEW WITH THE REV. MR. HARRY E. SMITH

Harry Smith, the Presbyterian student chaplain, talks about the changes for the better in Catholicism and in Protestantism.

### Authority:

1) QUESTION: It has often been said that the gravest difference between Protestants and Catholics is over the question of authority. Could you outline what would be considered a Protestant notion of legitimate authority within the Church? Could you indicate how authority in the Catholic Church goes counter, either in practice or in principle, to the Protestant notion of legitimate authority?

ANSWER: Surely this question of authority is one of the key issues in any Protestant-Catholic dialogue today. And I guess some would say it was the problem at the heart of the Protestant Reformation. In one sense, we could state it this way: it is the question of the relation of delegated authority to ultimate authority, or the degree to which human authority figures or symbols can speak in any ultimate way.

It is fair to say that for most Protestants there are three sources of authority: Scripture, the Church, and the Holy Spirit. The Bible is authoritative, it is normative, when it is understood to contain the record of God's Work in history and what he expects of his people. But it must always be understood, interpreted, through the work of the Holy Spirit; the Holy Spirit is as much at work in the interpretation of Scripture today as in the writing of it in Biblical times. To fail to recognize this is to turn respect for the authority of Scripture into a kind of biblical literalism, or bibliclatri, worship of the Scripture as an end, rather than as a means to understanding God's will. The Church, which in one sense determined what was to be included in the Bible, but in another sense uses the Scripture as its norm to determine what its life will be like--the Church is the second normative authority for Protestants. And again without being checked and balanced by Scripture or being guided and open to the Holy Spirit, the Church's authority can be diverted into an narrow denominationalism. The third source of authority for Protestants is the Holy Spirit, which is at work both in the Church and in providing an understanding of Scripture which is authoritative. Individual reliance upon the Holy Spirit as the only authority, without being checked by Scripture or Church, can lead to the kind of hyper-individualism or pure subjectivism that is so typical of much of Protestantism. It is the balance, it seems to me, of these three, Scripture, Church, and Holy Spirit, that forms the Protestant understanding of authority.

Put another way, Paul Tillich used to speak of the "Protestant Principle" as the recognition that all human institutions, ideas, creed, structures, even the Church, even interpretation of Scripture, stand under the judgment of God; that these can never be absolutized as ultimate. It is this recognition that only God is unconditional that makes all Protestants suspicious of any institution, creed, or interpretation of the Bible that would claim for itself absolute authority and fail to take into account the work of the Holy Spirit and the judgment of God upon them.

2) QUESTION: Many Catholic theologians teach that the three sacraments of baptism, confirmation, and holy orders are grades in the sharing of the priesthood of Jesus. Moreover, all three sacraments have a permanent effect on the recipient; i.e., it is impossible by definition to receive any of these sacraments more than once. In that holy orders is the fullest sharing in the priesthood of Jesus and the fullness of holy orders is enjoyed only by the bishop, it is clear that authority in the Catholic Church has an especial sacramental grounding, i.e., it works a sacramental transformation on the recipient similar in some ways to the sacramental transformation worked by baptism. How does such a conception of Church authority differ from the Protestant conception?

ANSWER: In your second question it seems to me that two quite different categories are mixed. It is difficult for me as a Protestant to think of authority in sacramental terms. Sacraments, for me as a Protestant, are outward and visible signs of inward and spiritual grace. And for me, there are two sacraments, the Lord's Supper and baptism. These were both instituted by Jesus and they are available to all believers. So in this sense, the sacraments do not include for me holy orders, although holy orders and marriage may have sacramental meaning, i.e., they may in some sense communicate God's grace. The apostolic role, or participation in the Church's mission in the world, is not to me a sacrament but rather something delegated by Christ to his followers when He said, "All power and authority is given to me. Go therefore into the whole world." The authority, the *exousia*--the Greek word He uses--which He delegates is the authority He had from God which He passes on to those He calls. In this sense, all who are called by Christ are to participate in His mission. There are no degrees or grades of participation. Hence the distinction that Protestants make between clergy and laity, between the ordained and the unordained, is not a distinction of degree of participation in Christ's kingdom. All His followers are called for participation. Rather it is a functional distinction based upon specific gifts and training and the location of one's work. In this sense it does not help me to talk about the authority that Christians have in sacramental terms.

### Liturgy:

3) QUESTION: Many conservative-minded Catholics feel that the liturgical reforms have made Catholic worship not simply similar to Protestant worship but the same thing as Protestant worship. Do you think that there is still a significant difference between Catholic and Protestant worship?

Answer: In thinking about the possible convergence of Protestant and Catholic understanding of worship, it seems to me that both are concerned to glorify God and to provide occasions to praise him and become sensitive to His will in the world. The central difference historically has been that Protestant worship has tended to be more subjective, more emotional, more concerned with such questions as, "What did you get out of the service?" and "Do you like our preacher?" I guess it is a typical Protestant statement, coming out of the worship service, to say to the minister, "I certainly enjoyed your sermon." Protestants seem to be more con-



cerned about how they feel about worship, about who worships with them, and about the sense of participation they have in it. Roman Catholic worship, on the other hand, seems to have been traditionally more objective, with little concern about who is seated next to the worshipper, or whether he can understand or hear all that is going on. The Mass was being said whether people were there or not; it had an objective reality which could be localized at a particular place in the chancel.

Today, on the one hand, Protestant worship seems to be becoming more objective, less emotional, more theocentric, and less anthropocentric. And at the same time Roman Catholic worship seems to be becoming more subjective in the best sense, that is, more concerned that individuals participate in the service and understand what is being said, that they hear the priest. It is to be hoped, therefore, that we can learn from each other in the area of worship and liturgy--that Protestants, with our emphasis upon participation by the whole congregation, will be able to contribute to the Roman Catholic understanding of worship, and at the same time learn from Roman Catholics the need for a kind of conscious structure in worship, meaningful liturgy, and an appreciation for dramatic movement, for physical involvement in worship, so that it is not simply a cerebral or rational exercise, but something which involves the whole person. It seems to me that there are no significant differences in the area of liturgy which cannot be overcome through exposure and experience.

4) Question: Among others, the Catholic theologian, Louis Bouyer, feels that in the past Catholic practice has emphasized the Real Presence of Jesus in the Eucharist to the detriment of other aspects of the Eucharistic celebration. It is urged that Catholics not deemphasize the Real Presence of Jesus in the Eucharist but that we put it into the full context of the Eucharistic celebration, i.e., reemphasize all the other aspects of the Eucharistic celebration. Does such urging suggest that there could be a convergence of Protestant and Catholic teaching on the Eucharist?

Answer: You ask about the meaning of the Real Presence. Here, it seems to me, the greatest problem is the quite different interpretation of what this means between Protestants and Catholics. Although some Protestants think of the Holy Communion as simply a memorial feast, as "memory time" around the Lord's Table, most Protestants believe in some way in the Real Presence, that is, that Jesus Christ is uniquely present in the Holy Communion. The real difference, however, is that we do not, as Protestants, try to explain this substantialistically, saying just how He is present in the bread or wine, or emphasizing the elements as where He is present. We tend to leave this in the area of mystery. Rather, we emphasize the action in the Holy Communion, that Jesus Christ is present in the breaking of the bread. It was after His disciples saw Him break bread in the post-Resurrection experiences that they recognized Him. He was recognized in the breaking of the bread. So it is in the action, the doing, that the presence of Jesus Christ is made clear. And paradigmatically, it is in the sharing of Jesus Christ with others, the breaking of the Bread of Life, that He is most fully glorified in the world.

Now if there is a new concern for the total context of the Eucharist in the Roman Catholic Church, on the one hand, and a new concern for the celebration of Communion in a more responsible and regular way in the Protestant Church, on the other, hopefully there can be a greater convergence here than in the past.

5) Question: For most, if not all, Roman Catholic and Eastern Orthodox believers, complete objectivity in the celebration of the Eucharist is bound up with the notion that the elements in Holy Communion undergo a radical change, i. e., objectivity is attained when the reality of Christ's Presence is located beyond the subjectivity of the worshipping community in the physical elements of Holy Communion. In that you have just indicated that in the Protestant Churches there is a new concern for objectivity in worship, do you think that this concern for objectivity could lead to a different attitude towards the Eucharistic elements, one similar to the Roman Catholic and Eastern Orthodox attitude?

Answer: I can see little hope for acceptance of the notion that Real Presence is to be understood substantialistically. The impact of existential philosophy, pragmatism, and the concern for function has made it well nigh impossible to return to the preoccupation with substance, with essentialistic categories, which preoccupied Christian theologians in the past. Little is accomplished, therefore, by contrasting Protestant and Roman Catholic views of the Real Presence in terms of "transubstantiation" or "consubstantiation."

Rather, to be concerned anew about the objectivity of worship is to recognize that in McLuhan's terms, "the medium is the message." But the medium in Holy Communion is not simply bread and wine but an action in which God's acceptance and grace are offered and accepted. To rescue this from sheer subjectivism is to emphasize the corporate context in which such grace is offered, its implications for reconciliation with others, its availability in spite of our sense of unworthiness, and the relation between this action and the grace-full actions through which we become truly present to other persons.

### The Mission of the Church in the Modern World

6) Question: The Catholic Church is dedicated to maintaining its tradition, i. e., its link with its teaching of the past. What do you think are the advantages and disadvantages of such a commitment to tradition for the Church in its attempt to carry out its role in the contemporary situation?

Answer: I greatly admire the profound sense of tradition which I find in many Roman Catholics. There seems to be too little appreciation of our history among Protestants and too little understanding of how we are indebted to our past. The problem seems to be, however, how to draw upon tradition in a creative way, how to be shaped by it without being bound to it.



One Anglican theologian has written a book called Freedom, Tradition, and the Spirit in which he speaks of "traditioning" in a very exciting way as the recognition of tradition as that which gives direction but leaves things open-ended in the future, which leaves the future open so that we are free to respond to it in the light of our tradition.

Perhaps the problem of how to relate to tradition is what is really at stake in the debate concerning the "New Morality." I get the impression that the old morality often involves a bondage to tradition that turns principles into laws and insists that they can be applied in all places and at all times in the same way. On the other hand, existential ethics rejects the notion that there is any continuity between situations and becomes antinomian, rejecting entirely the notion that we can be directed by our past. The new morality, at its best, is calling for a creative use of tradition, an understanding of principles from the past which recognizes that they must be applied in each situation in a new and creative way. At its best, then, the New Morality is a good illustration of how one can draw from tradition without ignoring or disregarding it, and yet recognize that tradition itself frees us to relate to the future in a new way.







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